

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, November 8, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAG</u>
State Budget	2-3
Juvenile Justice	4-5
Domestic Violence	6-7
Health Care	8
Food Assistance	9-13
Homelessness	14-19
Charities	20-21

*Important story at this spot

MIRS

November 6, 2007

House Passes DHS Fix

Today, with much fuss and bother, the House passed **SB 0511**, a supplemental budget bill that would "fix" the Department of Human Services (DHS) budget Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** signed six days ago.

The DHS budget (**SB 0232**) inadvertently included language to fully privatize the department's adoption division, which was only supposed to be partially privatized. **SB 0511** undid the full privatization within the budget and included appropriations for 150 field staff positions, reflecting the budget agreement between the Legislature and the Governor.

Obviously, the Democratic majority in the House could pass the bill on its own, however, the vote on the bill took a protracted period of time this afternoon, as six Democrats held back their support - casting neither yes or no votes.

Those Democrats were Reps; Pam **BYRNES** (D-Chelsea), Marsha **CHEEKS** (D-Detroit), Ed **CLEMENTE** (D-Lincoln Park), Marie **DONIGAN** (D-Royal Oak), Hoon-Yung **HOPGOOD** (D-Taylor), and Shanelle **JACKSON** (D-Detroit).

Two Republicans voted yes, Rep. Ed **GAFFNEY** (R-Grosse Pointe Farms) and Rep. Joe **HUNE** (R-Fowlerville), who represents the district within which one of the impacted facilities is located.

The result was that the voting board was left open for quite a while with one vote short of the 56 needed for passage.

"Ironically, what they're doing is a vote for better care of the children," House Minority Leader Craig

DeROCHE (R-Novi) told *MIRS*, referring to the Democrats who held back votes.

While the board was open, the Democrats held a caucus, where the situation was explained. However, the plan was to hold out the votes a little longer to see if Republicans who had voted for the DHS budget would support the fix.

Finally, Rep. Jack **BRANDENBURG** (R-Harrison Twp.) switched his vote. After that, all of the Democrats that had been holding back, except Byrnes and Jackson, went up with yes votes, as well.

Byrnes and Jackson ended abstaining.

The final vote tally was 59-49. It's not clear what will happen to the bill when the Senate takes it up.



Teen a ward of state indefinitely

Thursday, November 08, 2007

LaNIA COLEMAN

THE SAGINAW NEWS

MIDLAND -- A teen who orchestrated a rampage through three Midland Public Schools buildings is in the custody of the state.

Probate Judge Dorene S. Allen ordered the 15-year-old Midland youth to remain a ward of the state indefinitely because of his history of violence.

Court authorities say the teen's troubles date back about 16 months, roughly coinciding with the death of his father, and include various charges from burglary to felonious assault.

Parents of the teen and two conspirators, a 15-year-old Midland youth and a 13-year-old from Livingston County, agreed to pay \$144,428 restitution for breaking into and causing damage Aug. 19 to Eastlawn Elementary School, 115 Eastlawn; Central Intermediate School, 305 E. Reardon; and Carpenter Elementary School, 1407 W. Carpenter.

The intruders smashed windows, discharged fire extinguishers and knocked water fountains off the walls at Eastlawn, police have said.

At Central, the vandals smashed windows, doors, trophy cases, metal cabinets, computer and television screens, musical instruments, theater lights, speakers and a chandelier. They also discharged fire extinguishers, poured paint on floors and put a 15-square-foot hole in a cafeteria wall.

Carpenter's halls and several classrooms sustained water damage after pipes flooded the building from water fountains torn from the walls. The vandals also put holes in walls at Carpenter and smashed computer and television equipment.

A tipster led police to the boys.

Authorities later charged them with 10 counts each. The charges included three counts each of breaking and entering and malicious destruction of property, and single counts of larceny, safe breaking and possessing burglars' tools.

The teen who is a ward of the state pleaded guilty to the breaking and entering and malicious destruction of property charges plus two counts of larceny, while the other two pleaded guilty to the breaking and entering charges. v

©2007 Saginaw News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



At-risk males to get lifestyle training

Thursday, November 08, 2007

DARRYL Q. TUCKER

THE SAGINAW NEWS

Troubled teens with ties to gangs and involved in violence may leave that lifestyle and do something positive, Saginaw leaders say.

The Willie E. Thompson Fellowship Program Community Support Committee today was to announce an initiative called the Boyz-2-Men Manhood Training Program.

Organizers designed the effort to give at-risk males ages 8 to 18 a series of life lessons, said Saginaw County District Judge M.T. Thompson Jr., president of the Thompson Fellowship.

The first class will have about 100 males. Mid-Michigan schools, churches and members of the criminal justice system are referring participants to the effort, Thompson said.

The classes will focus on the consequences of involvement in gangs, violent crimes, drugs and alcohol, bullying and domestic violence. Participants also will learn about sex, health, family relationships, spirituality and fatherhood.

Judge Thompson is not related to Willie Thompson, who died of lung cancer Nov. 18, 2005, and served on the Saginaw Board of Education for three decades. Willie Thompson also worked as Delta's vice president of student and educational services for 10 of the 35 years he spent on the community college's faculty.

Classes will begin in January at Central Middle School, 1010 Hoyt. The sessions will run from 8 a.m. to noon every other Saturday. Participants will receive breakfast.

Each week, a different church, community, law enforcement, school or other organization is responsible for the life lesson, Thompson said.

Boyz-2-Men is a result of Saginaw's escalating crime rate and community alarm, Thompson said.

"We're going to mobilize every facet of the community," he said. "We think that this is so important that everyone should come out, roll up their sleeves and help us address this problem. We cannot expect or assume that someone else will do the job for our youth and our community. This is just unacceptable at any level."

Some of the class material is based on a two-book drug education and crime prevention action that Thompson and his daughter, Monica R. Nuckolls, a professor at Thomas Cooley Law School, authored and designed.

The two volumes are "Gangs, Bullies and Violent Crimes" and "Drugs and Alcohol," which are part of Thompson's ongoing series "Making Choices and Facing Consequences." v

Darryl Q. Tucker covers courts for The Saginaw News. Call him at 776-9686.

©2007 Saginaw News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

The County Press

'He wanted to have her whacked'

by Susan Younger
staff reporter

The case against a Metamora man accused of hiring hit men to break his wife's legs and kill a neighbor will be heard in Lapeer County Circuit Court.

District Court Judge John Connolly bound Richard James Ayers over to the higher court Monday on three counts of solicitation of murder and aggravated stalking. Ayers, a Shelby Township men's hair salon owner, has retained Detroit attorney Gerald K. Evelyn.

During the preliminary exam, Lapeer County assistant prosecutor Mike Hodges began the state's case by calling three former Lapeer County Jail inmates to the stand. Their identities are not being released to protect them.

One inmate said Ayers, who was in jail for violating a personal protection order, approached him and began talking about having his wife murdered and the dogs owned by her suspected lover, a neighbor, killed.

"He shows me a map that Mr. Ayers had drawn to where his wife jogged," he said. "He wanted to have her whacked."

The inmate said he initially thought Ayers was just venting, but the plan began to change and include the torture and killing of the neighbor.

"He wanted him tortured before he was killed," the former inmate said. "He wanted him to suffer."

Two other inmates said they were also approached by Ayers who seemed to be negotiating a price and again changing the plan.

"The first time he said he'd pay \$8,000 for just the neighbor," said one former inmate. "The second time it was \$20,000 for the neighbor, wife and dogs. He wanted me to put a note on the car, saying he's a home wrecker."

The third witness testified that instead of killing her, Ayers wanted someone to break both his wife's legs with a baseball bat.

Ayers' reasoning was, "She'll get fat and be miserable, because running is her life," the former inmate said.

Instead of complying with plans for the contract killing and torture, the men separately approached Lapeer County Sheriff's Lt. Duane Engelhardt. He and D/Sgt. Joe Nesbit gathered evidence, and one inmate was fitted with a wire to record conversations.

Nesbit "doctored" photographs to make it look like the neighbor was dead. The neighbor allowed investigators to use his home to stage the death scene.

An inmate testified that Ayers looked "shocked" when he saw the picture, then allegedly gave him a promissory note for payment.

Ayers' wife testified in a separate preliminary exam concerning the stalking charge.

"He told me he would kill me if I took his children away," she said.

Ayers' wife said he frequently abused her. She recalled times when he choked her and on one

occasion threw a hairdryer at her. She testified about a June 1 incident on Lake Metamora that began when her husband wasn't at home.

"I was on the beach and a neighbor, who we've both known for 10 years, came by and picked me and the children up on his boat," she said. "I asked to be dropped off and Rick came out of the bushes. He called me a whore."

Ayers held a knife to the man's throat and slashed his pontoon boat in anger in front of their children, she said.

She hired Lapeer attorney Steve Manko who served a personal protection order against Ayers on June 7. But the order did nothing to stop Ayers, who repeatedly phoned her and her clients by using her cell phone bill, she testified.

Problems escalated during a June 25 show cause hearing in front of Judge Michael Higgins.

"He mouthed, 'I'm going to kill you,'" she said. "I went into a panic attack and was shaking."

Ayers was arrested in the courthouse. He's suspected of hiring the hit men while serving 30 days in jail for violating the personal protection order.

Ayers is being held in the Lapeer County Jail without bond. He's scheduled to be arraigned Nov. 26 in circuit court.

Susan Younger may be reached at (810) 664-0811, Ext. 8122 or susan.younger@lapeergroup.com.

YOU HAVE MUG

Click here to return to story:

http://www.countypress.com/stories/110707/loc_20071107002.shtml

MIRS

November 5, 2007

Health Disparities Ail Society

African Americans are sicker than whites and receive worse health care, Dr. Khan **NEDD**, chairman of the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute, is expected to tell a Senate panel this week.

Discussions at the Senate Health Policy Committee may not create any cures, but an African-American doctor, an African American health policy advisor and former state Rep. Michael **MURPHY** hope it will start a dialogue.

Nedd, Murphy, and Gary **PUCKREIN**, CEO of the National Minority Quality Forum, are slated to testify at the Senate Health Policy at 3 p.m. Wednesday in the Senate Hearing Room in Boji Tower.

Nedd, who ranked 21 Michigan-based health care plans and the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, blames insurance companies' efforts to control health care costs for some of the inequalities.

"Sometimes the good intentions we have toward health care actually widens the gap," he said.

As does Medicaid.

Thirty percent of African Americans receive health insurance from the federal program, compared to 9

percent of whites, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Medicaid plans placed poorly in Nedd's study. With one exception — Health Plan of Michigan — only

private plans rated above average in providing "good access" to medication for heart, asthma, diabetes

and mental health treatment. The Veterans Administration ranked 16th overall, achieving "good access"

only 39 percent of the time.

The County Press

Columbiaville food pantry marks 20 years with FBEM

by JEFF HOARD
Staff Reporter

Ralph Secord remembers when a woman walked into the food pantry and saw something she hadn't tasted in a long time.

"She started crying," he recalled. "She said 'I haven't had peanut butter in years.'"

Secord and other volunteers handed out food to the needy Thursday morning in the monthly food pantry at Columbiaville United Methodist Church, 4696 Pine St. This month marks the 20th anniversary the food pantry has partnered with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, where the church can purchase food products at a lower cost.

To mark the milestone, a Swiss steak dinner will take place from 4-7 p.m. Nov. 10 at the church. All proceeds from the dinner will go to support the food pantry.

"It's very important in today's job market," said coordinator Dave Klaffer. "People are either unemployed or underemployed. We're seeing more and more that are underemployed."

It all started in the early 1980s when Columbiaville UMC member Vin Mishler asked fellow member Carl Hibbert if he would purchase groceries, with her money, and deliver them to a needy family.

Hibbert liked this idea and approached the church board and congregation for donations of food and money to start a small food pantry in the basement of the church. In 1985, Secord and his wife Charlotte began helping out.

The partnership began in November of 1987 with the Genesee Regional Food Bank, now known under its current name. Goods such as peanut butter, canned corn, cake mix, frozen meats, bread, soup, and much more are purchased for a low price.

"For every dollar spent, there is \$14 worth of groceries in the store," Klaffer said.

Klaffer said he's probably spent around \$8,500 at the food bank this year. To help pay for the costs, the food pantry receives various grants. Earlier this year, the United Way of Lapeer County donated \$1,500, the Emergency Food and Shelter Program gave \$500, and more came from families and individuals.

From January through October this year, the food pantry has purchased more than 14,000 pounds of food from FBEM.

Food donations play a key role as well, and more than 10,000 pounds of food has been donated this year. One of the biggest donations come from the U.S. Post Office food drive held in May each year. This year's haul brought in more than 17,000 pounds of food — 8,000 pounds going to the food pantry.

All this food doesn't go to waste as the need has increased over the years. Around 70 families stop by the pantry each month to pick up their boxes of food. Those who are above 130% of the poverty level are qualified for the goods.

In the last two months, there have been between 13-15 new families arriving, Klaffer said.

One woman who stopped by the pantry that morning, who wished to remain anonymous, said

it helps out a lot.

"My husband passed away (six months ago), and the income went way down," she said. "I'm not strong enough to stand over the stove. It helps."

The pantry is currently open 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. the first Thursday of each month. They will be looking at increasing their hours of operation in the near future due to increasing demand. The current volunteer staff is made up of Dave and Susan Klaffer, Jim Chaffer, Ralph and Charlotte Secord, Matt Dillion, and Charles and Janet Riley. Others have been involved with remodeling and moving the location of the food pantry to a larger, handicap accessible building across the parking lot from its old basement location.

Donations can be dropped off from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Wednesday at the church office.

"It's a great thing that helps a lot of people," said Matt Dillion, of Columbiaville, who's been volunteering for more than a year. "Without the help we've been receiving, we wouldn't have half the food here to give out. If you don't help the people, they'll all go hungry."

Jeff Hoard can be reached at (810) 664-0811, Ext. 8127 or jeff.hoard@lapeergroup.com.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.countypress.com/stories/110707/loc_20071107011.shtml



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published November 8, 2007

Donating venison

If you kill a deer you don't want:

- Field dress it.
- Follow the normal procedures to avoid spoilage.
- Phone Tom Cullimore at (517) 655-3960.

LSJ BLOGS

Unarmed, but still dangerous

Honoring Michigan's deer hunting tradition, state legislators will take an 18-day hunting break - then go to Florida to hunt mojitos.

Check out my blog at www.lsj.com/schneiderblog

Schneider: Hunters' surplus game can help feed local people in need

WILLIAMSTON - Here's a thought: Use all those car-deer- accidents-waiting-to-happen to feed the hungry.

"We can give away all the venison we can get," said Tom Cullimore, a board member of the Lansing Chapter of Safari Club International who has found a ready market for surplus game among the needy.

Maybe you like to hunt deer, but don't like venison. Or maybe you'll kill two deer this year, when your family can consume only one of them.

The perfect solution: Sportsmen Against Hunger.

Safari Club International founded the program in 1989 - distributing game through its local chapters to agencies that feed the needy. The Lansing Chapter joined the effort last year, when Cullimore delivered half a moose and four deer - three of which he killed - to the Williamston Area Food Bank.

"It went as fast as we could bring it in," he said.

Cullimore takes the venison donations to a commercial processor, who grinds it into hamburger. That may sound like a sacrilege to us back-strap connoisseurs, but as Cullimore pointed out, not everybody knows how to cook venison.

"If they do it wrong and it tastes bad, they'll throw the rest of it away," Cullimore said. "But everybody knows how to cook hamburger."

Ground venison, he pointed out, is particularly suited to dishes like chili, spaghetti sauce and sloppy Joes.

If you kill a deer you don't want or need, call Cullimore at (517) 655-3960. He'll pick it up, if necessary. He asks only that you exercise the normal standards of handling game - field dress it as quickly as possible after the kill, keep it cool and dry to avoid spoilage, etc.

Safari Club International will pay the fee to have the carcass processed into edible meat.

Cullimore won't accept roadkill carcasses because the processing fee is the same for a much smaller yield of usable meat.

Asked about the possibility of getting too many donations, Cullimore said that's a problem he'd welcome. He has a list of local agencies willing to handle the surplus.

"I'll work however many hours it takes," he said, "to get it distributed."

'Shy ladies' need cash

MASON - Charles Zanger steadfastly refused to tell me the names of two women who have made more than 100 patchwork quilts for members of a certain Army unit serving in Iraq.

"They're very shy ladies," said Zanger, a member of Mason's American Legion Post. "They don't want any recognition."

However, they do want to keep making their quilts and shipping them to the troops. But the costs of materials and postage are becoming too much for the two women - and the post (it costs \$8.95 to send two quilts to Iraq).

Contributions of materials and money may be sent to: American Legion, Brown Cavender Post, P.O. Box 361, Mason, MI 48854.

What do you think? Call John Schneider at 377-1175, send a fax to 377-1298 or e-mail jschneid@lsj.com.

Include your name, phone number, city or township.

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)

Food stamps make some feel wealthy

Posted by [Jackson Citizen Patriot](#) November 08, 2007 10:00AM

Categories: [Voice of the People](#)

JACKSON -- I can attest that \$518 in food stamps is an embarrassment of riches.

This year, I had to start raising my four young children by myself. After months of scrounging through bins of expiring food at grocery stores and waiting in lines at area food banks, I finally applied for food stamps. My children and I felt like millionaires filling our fridge with milk and the luxury of fresh fruit and vegetables.

When our income is hit hard, unfortunately, the only flexibility some of us have to tighten our belts is in our grocery budgets.

-- *Tanya O'Dell*



Study finds that veterans are a quarter of the homeless

11/7/2007, 8:31 p.m. ET

By **KIMBERLY HEFLING**
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Veterans make up one in four homeless people in the United States, though they are only 11 percent of the general adult population, according to a report to be released Thursday.

And homelessness is not just a problem among middle-age and elderly veterans. Younger veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are trickling into shelters and soup kitchens seeking services, treatment or help with finding a job.

The Veterans Affairs Department has identified 1,500 homeless veterans from the current wars and says 400 of them have participated in its programs specifically targeting homelessness.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness, a public education nonprofit, based the findings of its report on numbers from Veterans Affairs and the Census Bureau. 2005 data estimated that 194,254 homeless people out of 744,313 on any given night were veterans.

In comparison, the VA says that 20 years ago, the estimated number of veterans who were homeless on any given night was 250,000.

In Michigan, less than 1 percent of the state's more than 780,000 veterans are homeless. The number of homeless veterans increased nearly 13 percent from 3,110 in 2005 to 3,513 in 2006, according to the report.

Some advocates say the early presence of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan at shelters does not bode well for the future. It took roughly a decade for the lives of Vietnam veterans to unravel to the point that they started showing up among the homeless. Advocates worry that intense and repeated deployments leave newer veterans particularly vulnerable.

"We're going to be having a tsunami of them eventually because the mental health toll from this war is enormous," said Daniel Tooth, director of veterans affairs for Lancaster County, Pa.

While services to homeless veterans have improved in the past 20 years, advocates say more financial resources still are needed. With the spotlight on the plight of Iraq veterans, they hope more will be done to prevent homelessness and provide affordable housing to the younger veterans while there's a window of opportunity.

"When the Vietnam War ended, that was part of the problem. The war was over, it was off TV, nobody wanted to hear about it," said John Keaveney, a Vietnam veteran and a founder of New Directions in Los Angeles, which provides substance abuse help, job training and shelter to veterans.

"I think they'll be forgotten," Keaveney said of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. "People get tired of it. It's not glitzy that these are young, honorable, patriotic Americans. They'll just be veterans, and that happens after every war."

Keaveney said it's difficult for his group to persuade some homeless Iraq veterans to stay for treatment and help because they don't relate to the older veterans. Those who stayed have had success — one is now a stock broker and another is applying to be a police officer, he said.

"They see guys that are their father's age and they don't understand, they don't know, that in a couple of years they'll be looking like them," he said.

After being discharged from the military, Jason Kelley, 23, of Tomahawk, Wis., who served in Iraq with the Wisconsin National Guard, took a bus to Los Angeles looking for better job prospects and a new life.

Kelley said he couldn't find a job because he didn't have an apartment, and he couldn't get an apartment

because he didn't have a job. He stayed in a \$300-a-week motel until his money ran out, then moved into a shelter run by the group U.S. VETS in Inglewood, Calif. He's since been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, he said.

"The only training I have is infantry training and there's not really a need for that in the civilian world," Kelley said in a phone interview. He has enrolled in college and hopes to move out of the shelter soon.

The Iraq vets seeking help with homelessness are more likely to be women, less likely to have substance abuse problems, but more likely to have mental illness — mostly related to post-traumatic stress, said Pete Dougherty, director of homeless veterans programs at the VA.

Overall, 45 percent of participants in the VA's homeless programs have a diagnosable mental illness and more than three out of four have a substance abuse problem, while 35 percent have both, Dougherty said.

Historically, a number of fighters in U.S. wars have become homeless. In the post-Civil War era, homeless veterans sang old Army songs to dramatize their need for work and became known as "tramps," which had meant to march into war, said Todd DePastino, a historian at Penn State University's Beaver campus who wrote a book on the history of homelessness.

After World War I, thousands of veterans — many of them homeless — camped in the nation's capital seeking bonus money. Their camps were destroyed by the government, creating a public relations disaster for President Herbert Hoover.

The end of the Vietnam War coincided with a time of economic restructuring, and many of the same people who fought in Vietnam were also those most affected by the loss of manufacturing jobs, DePastino said.

Their entrance to the streets was traumatic and, as they aged, their problems became more chronic, recalled Sister Mary Scullion, who has worked with the homeless for 30 years and co-founded of the group Project H.O.M.E. in Philadelphia.

"It takes more to address the needs because they are multiple needs that have been unattended," Scullion said. "Life on the street is brutal and I know many, many homeless veterans who have died from Vietnam."

The VA started targeting homelessness in 1987, 12 years after the fall of Saigon. Today, the VA has, either on its own or through partnerships, more than 15,000 residential rehabilitative, transitional and permanent beds for homeless veterans nationwide. It spends about \$265 million annually on homeless-specific programs and about \$1.5 billion for all health care costs for homeless veterans.

Because of these types of programs and because two years of free medical care is being offered to all Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, Dougherty said they hope many veterans from recent wars who are in need can be identified early.

"Clearly, I don't think that's going to totally solve the problem, but I also don't think we're simply going to wait for 10 years until they show up," Dougherty said. "We're out there now trying to get everybody we can to get those kinds of services today, so we avoid this kind of problem in the future."

In all of 2006, the National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that 495,400 veterans were homeless at some point during the year.

The group recommends that 5,000 housing units be created per year for the next five years dedicated to the chronically homeless that would provide permanent housing linked to veterans' support systems. It also recommends funding an additional 20,000 housing vouchers exclusively for homeless veterans, and creating a program that helps bridge the gap between income and rent.

Following those recommendations would cost billions of dollars, but there is some movement in Congress to increase the amount of money dedicated to homeless veterans programs.

On a recent day in Philadelphia, case managers from Project H.O.M.E. and the VA picked up William Joyce, 60, a homeless Vietnam veteran in a wheelchair who said he'd been sleeping at a bus terminal.

"You're an honorable veteran. You're going to get some services," outreach worker Mark Salvatore told Joyce. "You need to be connected. You don't need to be out here on the streets."

Associated Press writer Kathy Matheson contributed to this story from Philadelphia.

On the Net: National Alliance to End Homelessness: <http://www.naeh.org/>

New Directions: <http://www.newdirectionsinc.org/>

Project Home: <http://www.projecthome.org/>

County of Lancaster: <http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/>

Veterans Affairs Department: <http://www.va.gov/>

U.S. Vets: <http://usvetsinc.org/>

Copyright 2007 Associated Press. All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

Study: Many of homeless are vets

"Veterans make up a disproportionate share of homeless people," the report says

Veterans need proper housing and supportive services, organization head says

California, Louisiana, Missouri, Washington have most homeless veterans

Half a million vets are at high risk for homelessness, report found

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- More than 25 percent of the homeless population in the United States are military veterans, although they represent only 11 percent of the civilian adult population, according to a report to be released Thursday.



Vietnam veteran Joseph Schlactur is among the U.S. homeless.

■ On any given night last year, nearly 196,000 veterans slept on the street, in a shelter or in transitional housing, the study by the Homelessness Research Institute found.

"Veterans make up a disproportionate share of homeless people," the report said.

"This is true despite the fact that veterans are better educated, more likely to be employed and have a lower poverty rate than the general population."

The National Alliance to End Homelessness, which includes the Homelessness Research Institute as its research and education arm, planned a press conference Thursday to discuss the study's findings.

"These findings highlight the need to provide veterans with the proper housing and supportive services to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place," said Nan Roman, the organization's president. "If we can do that, then we can greatly reduce the number of homeless veterans in general."

The states with the highest number of homeless veterans include Louisiana, California and Missouri, according to the research. Washington, D.C., also had a high rate.

About 44,000 to 64,000 veterans are classified as "chronically homeless" -- homeless for long periods or repeatedly.

Other veterans -- nearly 468,000 -- are experiencing "severe housing cost burden," or paying more than half their income for housing, thereby putting them at a high risk for homelessness.

The rates of the burden of housing costs were highest in Rhode Island, California, Nevada and Hawaii, but Washington, D.C., had the highest rate, according to the organization.

To reduce chronic homelessness among veterans by half, the report concludes housing coupled with supportive services should be increased by 25,000 units, and the number of housing vouchers for veterans should be increased by 20,000.

Some veterans, like Jason Kelley find themselves in a catch-22, not able to find a job because of the lack of an apartment, and not being able to get an apartment because of not having a job, The Associated Press reported.

"The only training I have is infantry training and there's not really a need for that in the civilian world," AP quoted Kelley as saying in a phone interview. In addition, he has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, he said, according to AP. Kelley served in Iraq with the Wisconsin National Guard.

A new Gallup poll released by Fannie Mae showed that nearly a quarter of veterans, or 24 percent, report having been concerned they may not have a place to live. Eighty-six percent of poll respondents believe homelessness among veterans is either staying at the same level or increasing.

In addition, 61 percent of poll respondents believe veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts are at least as likely to become homeless as veterans of previous wars.

The poll of 1,005 veterans was conducted September 4-October 17 and has a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

At the National Alliance to End Homelessness event, Fannie Mae will announce a \$200,000 grant to the Common Ground organization that will enable the construction of more permanent housing units for veterans.

"Our veterans have served America, and America must serve them," said Daniel Mudd, president and CEO of Fannie Mae, in a statement.

Common Ground is a nonprofit developer of housing and other solutions to prevent and end homelessness, according to the Fannie Mae statement.



Muskegon Chronicle

Catholic social agencies merge

Thursday, November 08, 2007

By Susan Harrison Wolffis

susanharrison@muskegonchronicle.com with Chronicle News Service reports

For 60 years, Catholic Social Services of Muskegon has helped the poor, the hungry and homeless in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana and Ottawa counties.

Starting today, its mission work will extend east to Grand Rapids.

Catholic Social Services officially merges today with Catholic Social Services of Grand Rapids and Catholic Human Development Outreach programs.

The new agency will be called Catholic Charities West Michigan.

Officials say it is one of the largest nonprofit service organizations in West Michigan.

A 4 p.m. ceremony today at Grand Valley State University's Eberhard Center in Grand Rapids will officially launch the new agency. Among those speaking will be The Rev. Walter M. Hurley, bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and Deborah McCormack, who was appointed CEO of the new entity in March.

"For over 60 years, our diocesan agencies have faithfully carried out the social mission of the church through their services and outreach to people in need regardless of faith tradition or financial status," Hurley said in a prepared statement. "Bringing together our existing services and resources into one entity will enable us to more efficiently and effectively respond to the needs within our communities."

A video featuring a former client from Grand Rapids also will be shown at the ceremony.

"Our whole mission is to help those who are most vulnerable," McCormack said. "The more we can get those efficiencies across our administration, the more folks we can help."

The new agency also will identify local efforts more closely with Catholic Charities USA, the church's national service network.

When announcing the merger earlier this fall, former CEO Bob Mills said there should be "no impact" on services already provided by the local agency, which will be renamed Catholic Charities West Michigan -- Lakeshore. Pam Cohn serves as interim regional director.

In 2006, the local agency, 1095 Third, served 11,500 individuals and families through 34 programs. It operated with an \$8.8 million budget.

"We felt it was time to combine our resources and strengthen our affiliation across the diocese," McCormack said.

©2007 Muskegon Chronicle

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

It's time to step up for those in need

Posted by [Jackson Citizen Patriot](#) November 07, 2007 08:43AM

In this time of need, Jackson County residents are responding.

All over this community, drives are under way in schools, offices and at doorsteps to stock bare food pantries. The United Way of Jackson County is reporting good results so far during its annual campaign. Groups like Toys for Tots and the Salvation Army are gearing up to brighten people's holidays.

The annual Warm the Children effort also is off to a good start. Volunteers recently started taking families on shopping trips to Meijer to buy winter clothes for local children.

For those who aren't familiar, Warm the Children uses donations to let families purchase \$83 in items their kids will need. More than 900 families should be helped this year. There are more who are turned away. Warm the Children is organized by this newspaper, the Jackson Junior Welfare League and Community Action Agency.

Like most charitable efforts, it can work only with your help. The program has collected \$21,134 already from donors (including \$10,000 from Meijer), which is great but not nearly enough to fulfill the need.

If money is a concern, you also can help by volunteering your time. Volunteer shoppers accompany everyone who buys clothes, and the commitment typically isn't more than an hour.

The rough economy could make this a difficult winter for many in our community. Look around, however, and you'll see that there's no shortage of caring people and organizations who are making sure those in need don't go cold, hungry or without other basic needs.

Now, it's your chance to help.

— Jackson Citizen Patriot